

**MINUTES**  
**BROWN COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY**  
**Monday, February 16, 2015, 3:00 p.m.**  
**City Hall, 100 N. Jefferson Street, Room 604**  
**Green Bay, WI 54301**

**MEMBERS:** Tom Diedrick—Chair, Ann Hartman—Vice Chair, Corday Goddard, Adam DeKeyser, and Sup. Andy Nicholson

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Robyn Hallet, Kim Flom, Stephanie Schmutzer, Matt Roberts, Patrick Leifker, Nicole Tiedt, Andy Dilling, Dave Wouters, Kelly Runge, Randy Gast, Jen Piedriet, Lynn Green, and Sadie DiNatale

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

1. Approval of the minutes from the January 19, 2015 meeting of the Brown County Housing Authority.

C. Goddard made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 19, 2015, meeting of the Brown County Housing Authority. A. Hartman seconded. Motion carried.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

None

**REPORTS:**

2. Report on Housing Choice Voucher Rental Assistance Program:
  - A. Preliminary Applicants  
P. Leifker reported that ICS collected 92 preliminary applications for the month of January 2015.
  - B. Unit Count  
P. Leifker stated that the unit count was 2,847 for January of 2015.
  - C. Housing Assistance Payments Expenses  
P. Leifker indicated the HAP expenses were \$1,064,841 for January of 2015.
  - D. Housing Quality Standard Inspection Compliance  
P. Leifker reported that 204 units passed the first evaluation, 88 passed re-evaluation, 94 failed, and there were 43 no-shows.
  - E. Program Activity/52681B (administrative costs, portability activity, SEMAP)  
Y. Tice reported that there were 130 port-out vouchers in the month of January, with an associated HAP expense of \$119,288.
  - F. Family Self-Sufficiency Program (client count, escrow accounts, graduates, participation levels, new contracts, homeownership)  
N. Tiedt reported that there were 74 active participants for January of 2015. Regarding participation levels there were 47 participants in level one, 17 participants in level two, six participants in level three and four participants in level four. There were two new contracts for January of 2015. There was one graduate in January of 2015. For escrow accounts, there are 36 open accounts. There are 62 homeowners on the program.
  - G. VASH Reports (active VASH, new VASH)  
N. Tiedt reported that there were two new VASH Voucher recipients in January of 2015, and there were a total of 20 active VASH voucher holders.

H. Langan Investigations Criminal Background Screening and Fraud Investigations

P. Leifker reported that in January of 2015, there were two new investigations assigned, two previous investigations closed, three carried over from 2014, and three investigations remain active. Only one application has been processed thus far which was approved. The fraud investigations broken down by Municipality for January of 2015 include Green Bay and Bellevue.

3. ICS's 2014 Annual Report

M. Roberts stated that this is the first year ICS has created an annual report focusing on the clientele served by ICS and BCHA programs. M. Roberts briefly described the report without going into much detail stating that this report can be used as a reference guide to be reviewed at everyone's own accord. The report clearly identifies data regarding who is participating in the Housing Choice Voucher Program and the Family Self Sufficiency Program and who are homeowners. Customer service reports were also conveyed in the report. Furthermore, types and locations of units were addressed which helps dispel concerns and stereotypes.

M. Roberts explained that this information is based off of data collected from December 31, 2014, going forward. Data will be added to the charts and graphs as it is received to continue to provide a comprehensive understanding and working knowledge of program participants. Ideally this report will be communicated once a year to track deconcentration measures and to identify demographic patterns along with other housing trends.

R. Hallet thanked M. Roberts for creating this document stating that it was very inclusive and will be very beneficial for staff to utilize.

T. Diedrick stated this report was very inclusive and commented on the fact that this report will be vital in continuing to promote deconcentration in high poverty areas while also expanding participation not just inside Green Bay but throughout Brown County.

R. Gast stated that this is a great tool to address participation in the programs and learn where to focus efforts. As one goal for ICS is to explore outreach ideas to increase program participation, (especially for males who are generally less active in offered programs) this report becomes a fundamental tool.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

4. Approval of revisions to Chapters 17 (Project Based Vouchers)

R. Hallet introduced this item by stating that the approval of Chapter 17 revisions was tabled last month in an effort to allow commissioners time to review the many changes proposed to the chapter.

R. Hallet went on to explain that one of the big questions in January's discussion of this chapter was in regards to rent floors (page 49). R. Hallet provided an explanation of the rent floors revision by first explaining that current regulations require that Project Based Voucher rents be based off the lower of three items: 1) 110 percent of the fair market rent, 2) rent reasonableness, and 3) rent requested by the owner. If one of four additional factors is met, a new rent reasonableness would need to be determined. The four factors are: 1) if there is a five percent or greater decrease in the fair market rent, 2) if there is a change in the utility responsibilities, 3) if the HAP contract is amended to substitute a different project based unit in the project, and 4) if there is any other change that may substantially affect the rent reasonableness. If factor one and two occur, not only is a new rent reasonableness determination needed but a new rent determination is needed as well.

With this in mind, R. Hallet stated that if a rent floor provision were adopted, when a situation occurs in which one of the four factors is met, which is quite rare, the rent floor provision would result in the

rent not dropping below the previously established amount. R. Hallet went on to recommend to the commissioners to not adopt a rent floor because the process is so rare and complex that it could result in employee oversight. No other questions were expressed pertaining to rent floors.

A. Nicholson asked for clarification on the first two bullet points on page 17-2.B. R. Hallet explained that regulations require Authorities to go through a competitive selection process when said Authority wants to allow additional units to become project based. There are two options for the competitive process. One option is that the Housing Authority can put out a Request for Proposals, which the BCHA has done in the past. The second option is that if the project was selected under a competitive bid for another purpose, most likely low-income housing tax credits, then the housing authority does not need to go out for bid for that project because it had previously gone through a competitive process. A. Nicholson questioned why a project would not go out for another competitive bid if the latter took place. R. Hallet replied that one of the reasons HUD implemented this process was because they wanted to streamline the process for tax credits to also have project based vouchers connected with it.

A. Nicholson asked about the time frame for which Request for Proposals need to be submitted. The language in question had previously been adopted by the BCHA, reducing the time frame for submission of a proposal from 30 days after the date of last publication to seven days. R. Hallet addressed A. Nicholson's question by stating that generally the process of project basing a project is initiated at the request of a property owner who wants Project Based Vouchers in his units. Aside from owners who requested the process, there generally have not been other owners who have submitted proposals. Considering this, the time frame was reduced in an attempt to streamline the process.

A. Nicholson then inquired whether seven days would be enough time for property owners to put together their proposals. A suggestion of 21 days instead of 30 was given. A. DeKeyser asked if these dates corresponded to advertising the Request for Proposal only once as opposed to once a week for three weeks, as the language previously stated. R. Hallet confirmed this but stated that the decision was ultimately up to the Authority. A. DeKeyser then stated that seven days might be plenty of time if the Request for Proposal were advertised three times over three weeks, as the seven day time frame would not begin until after the last advertisement was published.

A. Nicholson interjected with a note to R. Hallet asking to be sent a copy of a successful Request for Proposal in which R. Hallet confirmed that she would send him one.

A. Nicholson asked for clarification on page 17-16 regarding the proposed elimination of some language. R. Hallet expressed that she was not aware why this language was added in the first place, as it is illogical to begin with. R. Hallet stated that her suspicion was that this sentence was incomplete but there was no record on the BCHA or ICS side of why this language was added or what it intended to say. A. Nicholson asked what the language did. R. Hallet stated that with the site selection standard, the goal of project basing vouchers is to deconcentrate poverty and expand housing and economic opportunities. So, as the policy indicates if there is a census tract in which the poverty rate is 20 percent or greater, as a general rule, a project based voucher would not be approved in that area, although there are some exceptions. The language in question states that under no circumstance will an Authority approve project based vouchers in a census tract with a poverty rate greater than 75 percent. This makes sense but the language goes on to state "or 40 percent whichever is lower" which is illogical. Accordingly, R. Hallet recommends that the entire statement be removed; however if the commissioners want the first part of the sentence to remain that would be understandable. T. Diedrick stated that there were similar situations in the past in which units were denied because they fell in a census tract with high concentrations of poverty.

A. Nicholson's last question was in regards to a policy on page 17-39 discussing confidentiality. A. Nicholson inquired whether this policy was required by federal law. R. Hallet confirmed that it was.

A. DeKeyser asked to revisit the discussion regarding reducing the time frame for submitting Request for Proposals on page 17-39. The language in question was that the Request for Proposal would only be advertised once not once a week for three weeks. R. Hallet stated that this language was approved back in November of 2012 by the commissioners. Changing the language back to once a week for three weeks may increase the likelihood of having an owner see the advertisement but this would be an additional expense to the Authority.

T. Diedrick asked if there were other means of publications beside the Press Gazette. R. Hallet stated that the Request for Proposals is added to the website as well. Recently the authority has also been going through the County who advertises the BCHA's Requests for Proposals on their website.

A. DeKeyser then stated that he believed the question was whether the Authority believes anyone will undertake the project after viewing the request for proposal advertisement. A. DeKeyser asked how many times has a property owner viewed an advertisement for this in the paper and pursued an application. R. Hallet stated that it was rare; generally a property owner will go straight to the authority to pursue information on attaining project based vouchers. Nevertheless, per regulations an authority must advertise available Request for Proposals and putting it in the paper is the standard practice.

A. Hartman asked if there has ever been a time when a complaint was made to the authority because they did not have enough time submit an application for a Request for Proposal. R. Hallet said that has never been the case.

A. Nicholson made a motion to approve the revisions of Chapter 17 of the Admin Plan. A. DeKeyser seconded. Motion carried.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

5. Review and approval of Resolution No. 15-01 certifying the Brown county Housing Authority Annual SEMAP submission for fiscal year ending December 31, 2014.

P. Leifker opened up the discussion for SEMAP (Section 8 Management Assessment Program) which is essentially a report card from HUD. P. Leifker explained that approval is needed to submit the SEMAP report to HUD by the deadline of March 1 of 2015. Currently, the BCHA is considered a high performer. The report once reviewed and validated by HUD, will determine our new fiscal year status. Currently, there is nothing out of the ordinary on the application. Thus, at this time the BCHA is predicted to be a High Performer at 96 percent. Nevertheless, this could be potentially altered due to the impact of set aside funding that the Authority received late at the end of 2014. If this money is included in the budget amount, the BCHA's SEMAP score could be negatively affected from just over 95 percent down to 88 percent. If this occurs, the result would be losing the BCHA's High Performer status by receiving a Standard Performer status for the year. P. Leifker has already reached out to John Finger of the Milwaukee HUD office to see if receiving the HUD funds late will affect our application negatively as it was not within the BCHA's control.

A. Nicholson asked for clarification. P. Leifker stated that the status is dependent on whether the set aside funding is included by HUD in the total funding for the year. The initial budget authority received in March of 2014, did not include the set aside funding, which was awarded late in 2014. Based only on budget authority, the BCHA is over 95 percent, which allows the authority to qualify for High Performance. If the authority has to include the set aside funding (which was awarded in September and received in December), the percentile will be altered to 88 percent, which is considered Standard Performance.

A. Nicholson asked if it was BCHA's error that funds were received late. P. Leifker stated that it was not BCHA or ICS' error; rather, receiving the funds was dependent on HUD's time frame.

A. Nicholson asked what the SEMAP report will impact. P. Leifker stated that it is like an annual report card that is required by HUD. All that is needed is approval to submit it to HUD by the deadline of March 1, 2015. This update solely intends to explain that the reality might be different than the expected outcome due to the set aside funding discrepancy. This discrepancy may result in the BCHA being listed as a Standard Performer for the year as opposed to a High Performer. Nevertheless, the status itself will not affect the daily operations of the Authority.

R. Hallet mentioned that it is an internal goal to maintain a High Performer status. In addition, Housing Authorities have the ability to see the performance status of other Housing Authorities, so we want to ensure BCHA continues to maintain its reputation as a well-run Housing Authority. So, the change in status would be unfortunate.

A. Nicholson made a motion to approve Resolution No. 15-01 which was seconded by A. Hartman. Motion carried.

#### 6. Discussion on joint BCHA/ICS goals for 2015

R. Gast discussed the joint goal of addressing the issue of tenants strategically porting out and housing authorities absorbing these tenants as is convenient to them often to BCHA's detriment. This has been an issue for ICS as well as for the BCHA in which T. Diedrick stated their letter to legislatures has been recently submitted.

R. Hallet commented that all three legislatures to whom the port out letter was sent, acknowledged that they received the letter. One legislature's office has since contacted her to ask additional questions and give an update on the progress.

T. Diedrick and R. Gast agreed that this is an issue to continue to work on in an attempt to increase efficiency.

R. Gast inquired about how long an individual would have to live in Green Bay to gain residency before porting out. R. Hallet stated that there was no time limit so long as they have the proper documentation required by the Authority, which has been beefed up as much as possible.

R. Gast stated that another important goal is to consistently ensure quality customer service by utilizing customer feedback surveys. This is an area where ICS is continuously looking for ways to improve.

R. Hallet stated that another goal to keep in mind in the upcoming year is BCHA's Request for Proposal for the Housing Choice Voucher Program. The Request for Proposal will go out mid-year. Assuming ICS would like to continue to administer the program, preparing the proposal is something to keep in mind in the upcoming months. R. Gast stated that ICS has already begun to collect information for the proposal.

Another goal that R. Gast brought up was to try to get more Veterans involved in the Family Self-Sufficiency program. M. Roberts stated that working with the VA will help us get the word out to Veterans about the Authority's programs.

N. Tiedt stated that currently there is not a numerical goal to get Veterans involved in the programs or applying for VASH vouchers. Nevertheless, it is a goal to work with as many Veterans (and their case managers) as possible so long as they are eligible, available, and willing to participate in the programs. M. Roberts then stated the importance of beginning the conversation to set up numerical goals. T. Diedrick stated this goal might also require a presentation to the VA at some point this year or at the Aging and Disability Resource Center.

S. Schmutzer also commented that one of her goals is to seamlessly transition into the new federal requirement that mandates her to review ICS information. This has become a requirement as ICS is considered a sub-contractor of the BCHA. This is part of a Risk Based Assessment to identify and monitor possible risks.

#### 7. Discussion of promotion of VASH vouchers

T. Diedrick stated that the discussion of VASH voucher promotions was partially discussed in item six of the agenda.

R. Hallet added that in preparation for the discussion of veteran outreach, a meeting with P. Leifker and Cindy Beishir of the VA took place. An understanding of the VA's process to make referral was conveyed at the meeting in regards to the VASH Vouchers. R. Hallet explained that it is important to keep in mind that the VASH Voucher program is more of a Veteran's Affairs program than it is a HUD program. HUD is the vehicle to get the funding to the veterans but the requirements of VASH are really VA driven.

R. Hallet elucidated that the process to get referrals for the VASH program is quite extensive as it requires the VA to meet with prospective veterans twice to conduct needs assessments before they can be referred to ICS. For instance, if a veteran went straight to ICS asking for a VASH voucher, it would be ICS's duty to turn around and refer them back to the VA to begin first with the VA's process. This allows the VA to accurately and appropriately screen the veterans and steer them toward the right programs.

R. Hallet additionally explained that C. Beishir shared that the VA partakes in an extensive amount of outreach to get the word out to veterans. Thus, it is important that ICS and the BCHA be reminded of their role in the process as extensive amounts of outreach already being accomplished by the VA.

T. Diedrick expressed that he believes there is an untapped market out in the community where outreach is still needed.

A. Hartman asked if there is any available information that would explain how successful the veterans currently participating in the programs have been thus far. P. Leifker stated unfortunately no. N. Tiedt stated that for the most part, she believed that the majority are successful although ICS does not work as directly with the Veteran participants. R. Hallet also commented that to qualify for VASH, the veterans would have previously been homeless; the increased stability of their housing situation provided by the VASH vouchers is itself a success.

T. Diedrick stated that this will be a continued conversation at future meetings.

#### **INFORMATIONAL:**

#### 8. Preliminary unaudited financials

S. Schmutzer informed the Authority that some of the numbers entered into the Preliminary unaudited financials may change. Changes would not be made to any of the totals but in the categories in which money amounts are entered into. This information will be submitted into the HUD system by the end of February. Any numbers that would require a change after the financials are submitted would then be done so by the auditors.

T. Diedrick asked if there were any highlights or issues.

S. Schmutzer stated that there were no issues. The BCHA did receive a reduced amount of HAP payments in December of 2014, which was expected due to a buildup of reserve funds over the years. Thus, HUD reduced the BCHA HAP payment by about half (approximately \$500,000.00).

As another informational item, R. Hallet gave an update regarding the OIG Audit. The BCHA is currently in the survey phase of the audit and it is going very well. Two of the largest areas of the audit have been completed. The area of Housing Quality Standards has been completed and will not move on to the audit phase. The other area was the File Reviews in which there were a few areas of concern that were brought to staff's attention. This information will be brought to the auditing team to find out if these concerns are sufficient enough to proceed to the audit phase.

A. Hartman asked how often this Audit will take place in which R. Hallet replied that it is based off of the PHA's risk assessment, which is in part based on the amount of funding the PHA has.

Another item added by R. Hallet is in regards to a landlord meeting that is coming up and will be hosted by ICS. The meeting will explain to landlords some of the intricacies of the program to hopefully build improved relationships. P. Leifker stated that the meeting will take place Thursday, February 26, 2015, at the ICS offices. There will be a speaker talking about units going smoke free and there will be some discussion on the VASH program. Specialists and inspectors will also be available to answer any questions that may arise.

#### **BILLS:**

S. Schmutzer pointed out the only bill that is out of the ordinary is a check for Brown County Clerk of Courts because the BCHA will be taking 23 cases to small claims.

A motion was made to approve the bills of January 2015, by A. Hartman which was seconded by A. DeKeyser. Motion carried.

#### **FINANCIAL REPORT:**

S. Schmutzer reported that there is not too much to report yet regarding the financial report as it is still early in the year. Some money for the HAPPY software has been requested from ICS in advance. Y. Tice explained that it's a cost saving measure to pay it early.

#### **STAFF REPORT:**

9. Date of next meeting: March 16, 2015

R. Hallet reminded the Authority that the next meeting of the BCHA is on March 16, 2015.

T. Diedrick thanked the ICS Board Members for attending the meeting today.

ICS invited the Authority to a bowling fundraiser. ICS staff stated that invitations will be sent via email.

T. Diedrick suggested that ICS and the BCHA should hold off on having the year's second joint meeting for the reason that the competitive Request for Proposal is just around the corner.

C. Goddard made a motion to adjourn, seconded by A. Hartman. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 4:24 pm.

sd:rah:jd